

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----080168 172222Z /73

O 172202Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6537
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 05406

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, PORG, UNSC, ET, SO, FR
SUBJ: SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION ON THE HORN

REFS: A. STATE 42000. B. STATE 42102.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 17 WE BRIEFED
QUAI AFRICAN DIRECTOR GEORGY AND ALTERNATE DIRECTOR
HAREL ALONG LINES REFERENCE A. FRENCH STRONGLY OPPOSED
TO INCLUSION IN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OF ITEM ON
WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES UNLESS THIS LIMITED
STRICTLY TO OGADEN FOR REASONS GIVEN IN REFERENCE B.
FRENCH DEMARCHE TO BONGO HAD NOT INCLUDED REQUESTING
HIS TAKING THE LEAD IN ASKING FOR SECURITY COUNCIL
ACTION. FRENCH HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD FROM MEETING OF
FOREIGN MINISTERS IN NEW YORK THAT THIS WAS DESIRED.
THEY DO NOT FEEL IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO MAKE THIS

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APPROACH NOW IN VIEW OF THE REACTION THEY GOT TO THEIR
DEMARCHE FEBRUARY 13, IN WHICH BONGO SAID OAU COULD
NOT TAKE UP THE PROBLEM BECAUSE IT WAS SURE TO FAIL.
FRENCH BELIEVE IT VITAL TO SUCCESS OF WESTERN EFFORTS
IN SECURITY COUNCIL THAT SIAD BARRE ISSUE STATEMENT
ON WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OGADEN. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 17, WE DISCUSSED WITH QUAI AFRICAN DIRECTOR GEORGY (WHO WAS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING) AND ALTERNATE DIRECTOR HAREL EFFORTS TO INVOLVE SECURITY COUNCIL WITH THE HORN. AFTER BRIEFING THEM ALONG LINES REFERENCE A, WE NOTED THAT THE US ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO PURSUING THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE MINISTERS OF THE FIVE AT NEW YORK ON WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES FROM THE TERRITORY OF THE CONFLICT. GEORGY REPLIED IN SAME SENSE AS FRENCH EMBASSY MINISTER BOYER IN CALL ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HELMAN FEBRUARY 16 (REFERENCE B). THEY WERE VERY FIRM ON THIS POINT SAYING THAT DJIBOUTI MIGHT SHORTLY BE INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING. IF THE RESOLUTION WERE ADOPTED AS WE PROPOSE, THE FRENCH WOULD THEN THEORETICALLY BE OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW THEIR FORCES FROM DJIBOUTI DESPITE COMMITMENTS TO THE DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE. ADDITIONALLY, THERE IS THE QUESTION OF ESTABLISHING A PRECEDENT FOR ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA. FRENCH HAVE A MILITARY PRESENCE IN A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES THERE AND TAKE THEIR DEFENSE OBLIGATIONS SERIOUSLY. WE RESPONDED ALONG LINE TAKEN BY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HELMAN TO EFFECT WE HOPE OUR UN MISSIONS CAN ARRIVE AT A FORMULATION WHICH WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT BOTH OF OUR INTERESTS. AFTER GEORGY HAD LEFT THE MEETING, HAREL SAID GOF STILL HAD PROBLEMS WITH OUR LATEST FORMULATION, BUT THAT
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LANGUAGE CALLING FOR "CESSATION OF ALL HOSTILITIES IN

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EXDIS

THE OGADEN AND IMMEDIATE AND RAPID WITHDRAWAL OF ALL
FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES FROM THAT TERRITORY" WOULD
PROBABLY BE ACCEPTABLE.

3. WE WERE INFORMED THAT PRESIDENT BONGO'S RESPONSE
TO THE FRENCH DEMARCHE IN LIBREVILLE AIMED AT GETTING
HIS REACTION TO THE ELEMENTS OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL WAS
THREEFOLD:

--THE HORN IS AN OAU PROBLEM. HOWEVER, AFRICA
IS DIVIDED AND BONGO DID NOT WANT THE OAU TO GET TOO
DEEPLY INVOLVED WITH IT AT THIS TIME AS THE EFFORT WOULD
FAIL AND FURTHER DAMAGE OAU PRESTIGE.

--THE WESTERN TEXT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE. BONGO
COULD ENVISAGE GABON SUPPORTING IT IN THE SECURITY
COUNCIL.

--THE REAL ANSWER FOR THE HORN PROBLEM IS FOR THE
US, AS THE WORLD'S GREATEST POWER, TO TAKE IT UP WITH
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THE SOVIETS DIRECTLY.

4. GEORGY SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAD NOT REQUESTED BONGO
TO TAKE THE LEAD IN BRINGING THE HORN TO THE SECURITY
COUNCIL AS THEY HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD THIS TO BE THE SENSE
OF THE DECISIONS REACHED BY THE FIVE MINISTERS IN NEW
YORK. HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USE-
FUL TO MAKE THIS REQUEST OF BONGO. IF HE WAS NOT WILL-
ING TO ENGAGE THE OAU FOR FEAR OF FAILURE, HE CERTAINLY
WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN INDICA-
TING OAU HELPLESSNESS BY TAKING IT TO THE UN. GEORGY
SAID HE BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT GABON WOULD SUPPORT A
WESTERN RESOLUTION.

5. GEORGY REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE CRUCIAL
ELEMENT IN SUCCESSFUL WESTERN ACTION AT THE UN IS A
STATEMENT BY SIAD BARRE AGREEING TO WITHDRAW HIS FORCES
FROM THE OGADEN IN EXCHANGE FOR CERTAIN CONDITIONS,

INCLUDING A CEASEFIRE AND EMPLACEMENT OF A NEUTRAL
FORCE IN THE OGADEN TO ENSURE NO REPRISALS WERE TAKEN
AGAINST OGADEN RESIDENTS LEFT BEHIND AFTER THE SOMALI
WITHDRAWAL. WITHOUT SUCH A DECLARATION
HE DOUBTED IT WORTH CONTINUING EFFORT AT THE UN.
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